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General Assembly
Thirtieth special session

Official Records

2nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 19 April 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

In the absence of the President, Mr. González Franco (Paraguay), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

General debate

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Arun Jaitley, Minister of Finance of the Republic of India.

Mr. Jaitley (India): I am delighted to join all representatives here today for this historic special session, as we gather to deliberate on the world drug problem, which continues to pose challenges across the world. We are meeting in this forum seven years after the adoption of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

We are also meeting only months after adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which will guide our efforts to build peaceful, prosperous and secure societies. The world drug problem impacts our ability to attain the objectives of our collective 2030 Agenda. It is a problem of global dimensions and requires collaboration across borders.

The three conventions on drugs adopted by the international community have served well in limiting and managing the drug problem. They have provided Member States with sufficient flexibility to fine-tune domestic laws to be commensurate with the realities and challenges of the twenty-first century. We strongly believe in the centrality of the three international drug control conventions in addressing and countering the world drug problem. We firmly believe that the conventions provide ample scope to incorporate the human face of the drug problem.

Terrorism constitutes one of the most dangerous threats to civilized society today. Terrorism knows no borders, and terrorists continue to strike cities and innocent civilians across continents. The growing nexus of drug trafficking and terrorist networks endangers peace, security and stability across regions. We must continue to toughen our collective fight against those evils.

India is firmly committed to the three United Nations conventions on drug matters. As a supplier of licit opiate raw material to the world and a traditional licit opium cultivator for centuries, India is fully conscious of its responsibility to eradicate any illicit cultivation, reduce demand and implement preventive and enforcement measures.

National efforts, however intense and sincere, cannot adequately deal with the drug problem. Bilateral, regional and international cooperation is essential in that area. One such area requiring extensive international cooperation is coordinated action against the emergence and abuse of new psychoactive substances. India recognizes the global importance of the licit trade in precursor chemicals and the need to

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effectively control the illicit trafficking in precursors for use in drug manufacture.

Several steps are being undertaken to strengthen supply- and demand-reduction activities, as well as treatment and after-care facilities, through a public-health approach. India is committed to ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion, abuse and trafficking and ensuring the availability of drugs for palliative care, pain relief and opioid substitution therapy for cancer patients and drug abuse victims. In May, 2015, India provided notice of uniform and simplified rules regarding essential narcotic drugs, so as to remove regulatory barriers.

Money-laundering, illicit financial flows and the proceeds of crime generated by drug trafficking and other transnational organized crime remain major challenges The criminal networks and drug syndicates can be effectively busted only by disrupting their financial flows. I am happy to share the fact that India and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) hosted the Networking the Networks meeting in November 2015 in New Delhi in order to enable fast interregional cooperation in that context.

To further augment regional cooperation in the combating of crimes related to drugs and money-laundering in the region, India, in coordination with UNODC, is in the advanced stages of setting up a regional coordination centre for South Asia, known as the South Asia Regional Intelligence and Coordination Centre, with India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives as founding members.

The task ahead for the next three years is arduous indeed. I am confident that this special session and its outcome will provide new impetus to national, bilateral, regional and international actions towards realizing a world free of drug abuse in our lifetime and achieving the sustainable future we want.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alain Berset, Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Home Affairs of the Swiss Confederation.

Mr. Berset (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): In 1998, the previous special session on drugs proclaimed: "A drug-free world — We can do it!" Today, the contours of a new paradigm — placing the human being, and not substances, at the heart of drug policies — are taking shape. That development is very important for Switzerland and is to be commended. We therefore support the recommendations of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which call for improved access to medicines. The suffering of sick persons owing to insufficient treatment of pain is an unacceptable side effect of the international drug-control regime. Rectifying that situation is a humanitarian imperative.

Likewise, the call for abstinence cannot be and must not be our sole response to drug consumption. We must also adopt practical measures aimed at mitigating the nefarious human and social repercussions of addiction, including the risk of HIV infection and other communicable diseases. Hence, risk reduction is an indispensable pillar for drug policy. It is an indispensable pillar that goes hand in hand with prevention and therapy. Such risk reduction must be coordinated with the repressive measures. We are aware that the repression of open drug markets increases health risks. An integrated and balanced drug policy can only be successful with close cooperation between police services and public-health agencies.

I mentioned that placing the individual at the heart of drug policy requires criminal justice with a human face. In that regard, Switzerland reaffirms its opposition to the use of capital punishment in all places and under any circumstances, and we regret that the death-penalty issue was not included in the outcome document. We had the opportunity to put forward our position on that point this morning when the document was adopted (see A/S-30/PV.1). It is inadmissible for the death penalty, an ineffective measure, still to be used as a response to drug-related offences.

We must seize the opportunity afforded to us by this special session, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), to implement an international drug policy that places the human being at the centre, a policy that is based on health and human rights.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Patrick Kanner, Minister of Urban Cohesion, Youth and Sports of the French Republic.

Mr. Kanner (France) (*spoke in French*): France fully endorses the statement made by Commissioner Mimica on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1).

The adverse effects of drug use on public health, especially on young people, are well established. The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that in a recent report.

We are highly aware of the threat that drug trafficking poses to our security and the rule of law. Violence goes hand in hand with trafficking. Drug trafficking is also one of the ways that certain terrorist networks use to finance their operations, against which we have been working as strenuously as possible. France is, unfortunately, well placed to make such a statement.

Faced with this triple threat — to health, society and security — France is implementing a comprehensive and integrated response, not only fighting trafficking and money-laundering, but also promoting prevention, medical care and rehabilitation. Such a comprehensive approach is one recommended by the three international conventions, which offer both a shared legal framework for harmonizing our legislation and organizing our cooperation and the possibility of adopting responses adapted to the national and regional contexts of States parties. The conventions are the base for our engagement. That common ground must be combined with respect for human rights.

France reaffirms its consistent opposition to the death penalty in all places and under all circumstances. France also calls for respect for the international commitments in the field of human rights, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

When it comes to responding to the drug problem, I wish to highlight three priority areas of action in which my country is fully invested.

First, in the health field, France has developed numerous risk-reduction programmes that have in particular made it possible to considerably reduce the HIV infection rate.

Secondly, we are strengthening the fight against trafficking and the illicit financial flows resulting from the drug problem by focusing on the use of chemical precursors for drug production and by strengthening our police and customs cooperation, as well as by developing judicial cooperation, in order to dismantle the networks, confiscate traffickers' assets and fight money-laundering and corruption.

Thirdly, we are strengthening prevention, which is a crucial component in our arsenal because it is one of the ways of reducing drug demand. It is in that spirit that France today organized, together with Sweden, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and WHO, a special event on prevention. It is called "Listen First" — listen first to understand and then act.

Whatever our national characteristics may be, we have the same concern, a shared concern: that of stopping drug trafficking. In the face of the seriousness of that challenge, our only choice is to come together. That is why France welcomes the adoption of a road map today by our General Assembly, including the operational recommendations for responding to the various dimensions of the world drug problem. It is now up to us to implement the road map with a clear mind, with determination and with the utmost effort for our youth.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Oliver Letwin, Minister for the Cabinet Office of the United Kingdom.

Mr. Letwin (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes this special session as a unique opportunity to enhance the global approach to the drug problem and to establish a clear road map for a new political declaration and plan of action on international cooperation toward an integrated and balanced strategy to counter the world drug problem in 2019. We must ensure that our work is fully integrated with the global Sustainable Development Goals, because the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and our efforts to address the harm caused by drugs are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The United Kingdom welcomes the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex). It combines ambitious goals with operational recommendations that all Member States should consider implementing.

The United Kingdom is delivering a modern, balanced, evidence-based response to drugs in accordance with the United Nations conventions. There has been a reduction in drug misuse among adults and young people over the past ten years in England and Wales, and more people are recovering from their dependency now than in 2009. We are currently developing a new drug strategy, which we will publish shortly. Our 2016 drug strategy will build on our current balanced approach of reducing demand, restricting

supply and building recovery. We will tackle drugs as a key driver of crime.

Responding to the global challenges posed by new psychoactive substances is a priority for the United Kingdom. In January, we introduced new legislation, the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. It introduces a general ban on the production, supply, import and export of all new psychoactive substances and complements our wider, balanced response.

During the past three years, the United Kingdom has worked to demonstrate global leadership on that issue with the long-term objective of establishing a sustainable international system that can deal effectively with new psychoactive substances. Our work has included forming the International Action Group on New Psychoactive Substances, an informal group of States and international organizations that seeks to coordinate and drive the international response. The international community has made significant progress, but there is more to be done. We must redouble our efforts to meet the challenge of new psychoactive substances, including through data-sharing, the exchange of policy ideas and international cooperation to bring the most harmful substances under international control.

The United Kingdom is able to implement a smart, proportionate criminal-justice response at each stage of the process. That includes alternatives to incarceration for minor drug offences, the integration of criminal justice and health services so as to ensure that offenders who misuse drugs get the support they need, and independently produced sentencing guidelines that ensure consistency and proportionality in sentencing. Importantly, the United Kingdom delivers proportionality in criminal justice and good health outcomes while retaining the criminal status of drug possession.

The United Kingdom has a proud history of championing human rights, and we oppose the use of the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle. The United Kingdom does not provide criminal justice or other assistance that may result in a death sentence being applied. We will hold international agencies funded by the United Kingdom to account for compliance with that principle and all other human rights obligations.

The United Kingdom remains fully committed to reducing the transmission of HIV and other blood-borne diseases among people who inject drugs. The agreed target of reducing HIV transmission by 50 per cent by 2015 has not been fully met, but we now have the tools to achieve that reduction at our disposal. We have clear evidence that the package of measures set out in the World Health Organization's 2014 consolidated guidelines are effective. The United Kingdom is proud to be the second largest international funder of HIV prevention, care and treatment, and we will continue to take a leading role on the issue, including at the 2016 High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS here in the General Assembly in June.

Up to 5.5 billion people live in countries with low or non-existent access to controlled medicines. Too many people live and die in avoidable pain. The United Kingdom will continue to invest in supporting health systems across the world, and we will strengthen international efforts to make material progress in that area in accordance with the road maps set by the global Sustainable Development Goals and the accompanying targets.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Peter Dunne, Minister of the Interior, Associate Minister of Health and Associate Minister of Conservation of New Zealand.

Mr. Dunne (New Zealand): In three days' time, as we catch our trains and board our planes to return home, the world will ask what was achieved here in New York at this special session of the General Assembly. The question is the most important question that could be asked of delegates: what will we collectively have to show for our efforts?

The outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which we adopted at the previous meeting, is broad, but New Zealand notes with strong regret the failure to achieve consensus on the inclusion of a reference to the death penalty. It may not be in the outcome document, but, make no mistake, the death penalty has no place in civilized society. Blocking the inclusion of references to it not only does not change that fact but does a disservice to those who seek to reduce the harm caused by drugs. The outcome document talks of reiterating, reaffirming and intensifying our efforts, but unless they result in tangible actions that make a difference to people's lives, they will be just words, and critics will hold them up as further evidence of an international system that promises much but achieves little.

There has been a welcome development in recent years in the form of a shift away from treating drug

issues as primarily a law-and-order responsibility to a health focus, but let us not rest on our laurels. Last year, at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, I spoke of the importance of the three fundamental pillars of drug policy: proportion, compassion and innovation. New Zealand has woven those principles into its approach to addressing drug issues and has included them as central tenets in our recently released national drug policy.

But perhaps there is a fourth pillar that is missing: the pillar of boldness. Incremental movement, if any, has been the norm for drug policy development for as long as I can remember, and the movement has not always been forward. But as encouraging as the shift has been, the fact is that, compared to the global narcotic industries, we are moving at a glacial pace, hamstrung by a grossly outdated and excessively punitive approach. So I put it to those assembled here in the Hall that, globally, we need to be bolder in our approaches. With boldness come some obstacles, for no great success was ever achieved without failure. The great American inventor Thomas Edison, on his development of the light bulb famously remarked, "I have not failed. I have just found 10,000 ways that don't work."

I suggest that, globally, drug policy is approaching its own 10,000 failed attempts, and it is time to flick the enlightenment switch on. So, we say that responsible regulation is the key to reducing drug-related harm and achieving long-term success in drug control approaches. But the key word here is "responsible". We must not conflate boldness with recklessness; changes in policy must ensure that the likelihood of harm is minimized. It is imperative that any move to a regulated market be an authority-led process and that we do not find ourselves in the position of playing catch-up.

Of course, that is easier said than done. Certainly, in New Zealand we allowed an unregulated, under-the-radar, new psychoactive substances industry to steal a march before it was brought into a regulated system through our Psychoactive Substances Act. That Act allows for such products to be brought to market if they can be proven to be low-risk, which essentially puts the onus of proof back onto the industry.

For those nations with federal systems of Government, in which individual States have pushed ahead with drug law reforms, the need for getting the balance right is critical. There are now a number of examples where a reformist cannabis policy has simply outstripped the ability of robust regulation to control the substance — a situation that ultimately damages the reform movement and increases the potential for harm.

Currently, New Zealand's position is this: if cannabis is to be used for medical purposes, it must be subject to the same testing processes as any other therapeutic pharmaceuticals. Identifying the greatest therapeutic benefits and determining the most appropriate ratios, dosage and delivery mechanisms will come only through a robust, scientific approach. Otherwise, we are essentially flying blind and hoping for the best, an approach that flies in the face of an evidence-based medicines policy. That said, for those with a terminal or debilitating illness, New Zealand's position is that a compassionate approach is warranted, and ensuring that such an approach exists is a priority. New Zealand also calls on the pharmaceutical industry to step up and invest more in its research and development of cannabis-based products.

In closing, let me return to my introductory question: what will we achieve here in New York at this General Assembly special session? The answer will be seen in the changes that we see on a State-by-State basis in the coming years. If nations continue to muddle along, choosing the easy options and throwing the problems to their police and judiciaries, then the answer will be very little. But if the pace of change picks up, appropriate regulation is put in place and bold, innovative, compassionate and proportionate policy thrives, then the answer will be progress. I think that I know which of those two options I prefer.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gabriel Wikström, Minister of Health Care, Public Health and Sport of the Kingdom of Sweden.

Mr. Wikström (Sweden): Sweden fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Commission on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1).

Sweden welcomes the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex). I thank all those involved for their hard work. We are taking an important step towards a more balanced and more coherent drug policy. The focus on people's health is long overdue. The resolution helps send that message, and now the work must really begin.

The main responsibility for the real work falls on Member States. Drugs threaten people's safety and security through violence, corruption, and organized crime throughout the world in extremely varying degrees. Our realities vary, but we all share the threats to people's health. We must therefore all invest in real preventive measures that work to ensure the future health and success of our children's lives worldwide.

Such a future requires that we do substantially more than we are doing today, especially given the fact that just one out of six people with drug-use disorders has access to proper, evidence-based treatment. We need to ensure such access and treatment, as well as access to risk and harm reduction, in a broader public-health approach. We need to do our utmost to prevent the family tragedies that have resulted from drugs, and not seek to regulate or legalize even more of what is harming them. I believe that no coherent public health policy can include making available and accessible even more substances that are damaging to health. No public- health policy should unleash yet another legal global market in products that harm us and those around us.

Public-health policy must be science-based. It must be evidence-based. It must be based on up-to-date and ongoing scientific research, as illustrated, for example, by the recent World Health Organization (WHO) report on the health and social effects of non-medical cannabis use. Therefore, in our shared goals, we can work within our respective contexts and within and among nations.

Civil society has an enormous contribution to make, as it has done in supporting Sweden's preparations for this special session. We did not always reach an immediate agreement among all of us, as is the case in any country or within the United Nations. But we know that a focus on broad dialogue, mutual respect and all of the evidence are what pushes policy forward, and that including those who have personally experienced drug-use disorders is essential.

Target 3.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals addresses the prevention and treatment of drug use and drug-use disorders. We therefore call upon the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and WHO to strengthen cooperation aimed at implementing and guiding a public-health approach. We also call for all human rights organizations to stay involved and to keep up the pressure on us, the policy-makers, to protect the right to health, the rights of children, the rights of women and the right to a fair trial and proportionate sentencing for prisoners.

The United Nations drug conventions must be implemented in accordance with the principles of human rights. They are not parallel systems. Accordingly, we also call for stronger cooperation between the UNODC and United Nations human rights agencies. The United Nations system must now be specific as to how to fully support Member States, not only with regard to what works and needs to be done. It should also ask for delivery and results.

We therefore call on all those involved to work together to make the outcome document of the special session a reality. The cartels globalize what works for them. We must do so too, not out of defeatism and despair, but in the interest of health and hope.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Milton Romani Gerner, Secretary General of the National Drugs Council of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay.

Mr. Romani Gerner (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. Juan Andrés Roballo, the head of our delegation, was unfortunately prevented from coming here because of an emergency weather situation in our country.

The General Assembly is the highest and irreplaceable forum for frank debate, dialogue and consensus. Consensus can be genuine only if it permits and reflects diversity. The models and strategies with which we have confronted the world drug problem have not yielded the predicted results. New or renewed approaches, based on national laws and specificities to give a more effective and human response, have emerged.

The model known as the war on drugs throughout our region, promoted since the 1970s, is based on a skewed interpretation of the conventions and has thrown our strategy off balance. It has been unable to control the phenomenon, and, far from that, on occasion has caused damage more serious than that caused by drugs.

Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who has shown great intellectual courage, has said, "I believe that drugs have destroyed many lives, but wrong Government policies have destroyed many more." He wrote:

> "The war on drugs has not succeeded. Some estimate that enforcing global prohibition costs at

least $100 billion a year, but as many as 300 million people now use drugs worldwide, contributing to a global illicit market with a turnover of $330 billion a year...

"Prohibition has had little impact on the supply of or demand for drugs ... The widespread criminalization and punishment of people who use drugs and the over-crowded prisons mean that the war on drugs is, to a significant degree, a war on drug users — a war on people."

Mind-altering substances with psychoactive effects have been a resource for human beings throughout history, and that use has had many variations and motivations — cultural, religious and now commercial. Those substances have been used to benefit health and have also posed risks to health. What is new that we must incorporate into our thinking is that drugs are merchandise. They are special commodities that circulate and are consumed and generate profit. They also circulate in an illicit market, generating major profits that re-enter the formal economy through money-laundering. Market analysis is indispensable for dealing with that issue.

The current control regime based on strict prohibition seems to have shown itself to be inadequate, confusing and contradictory, if not prejudicial, for achieving the ultimate ends proposed in the conventions. While it is hoped that States will comply with the conventions, it is also hoped that those conventions will be clear, precise and consistent.

It has not been possible to efficiently regulate the circulation of such substances, which pose serious health risks, while at the same time ensuring respect for rights. In fact, the control mechanisms used and the agencies applying the laws have increased the level of danger. We are here to reaffirm that the ultimate purpose of the conventions is to safeguard rights — the right to well-being and health, the right of access to controlled substances for medical and scientific uses, and the right to relieve pain, to mitigate harm and to cooperate with the appropriate uses of drugs.

The preparatory process for the special session incited a discussion, which we welcome, but that discussion is not sufficiently reflected in the consensual text. There are aspects that many States, including Uruguay, consider inadequate, such as the urgent need to adopt a moratorium on the death penalty for drug offences, to ensure the proportionality of punishment, to decriminalize the possession and use of drugs, and to maintain a focus on harm and risk reduction.

The outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), adopted by consensus despite its deficiencies constitutes a step forward. The document expressly establishes the recognition that the three international drug control conventions provide States with enough flexibility to formulate and apply national drug policies in accordance with their priorities and needs.

But the most important part of the preparatory process that brought us to this special session is the environment of debate and dialogue, which is already generating a new consensus on the basis of diversity. The new language that is now being proposed calls for a society free from drug abuse; it should exercise the freedom to admit that harm reduction is an excellent approach to preventing abuse, that regulating markets is indispensable precisely in order to prevent abuse of any kind. Risk and harm reduction can serve as a model that cuts through supply and demand issues, has humanist virtues and ensures the respect for rights.

Uruguay has adopted strategic thinking on the necessary regulation of all markets. We are implementing a comprehensive approach, which led us in 2006, for example, to regulate the market of anonymous corporations for offshore operations, which we eliminated. We created several tools to sever the backbone of drug trafficking. On another plane, we also regulated the tobacco market, and we are doing the same with alcohol, despite great resistance from the markets.

Uruguay, subject to the provisions of its Constitution and its laws, in the exercise of its sovereign rights and in conformity with all international instruments, is developing, using a holistic approach, a model for the regulation of the cannabis market. Uruguay has strong institutions to safeguard public health. We have a system of continuous and rigorous evaluations. The new approach is appropriate to our history and to Uruguayan cultural specifics and our tradition. We do not claim to have a solution applicable to other countries. The plan is being operationalized in dialogue with civil-society organizations, with the States in the region, and with the cooperation of the University of the Republic, research centres and associations of health-care professionals. The International Narcotics Control Board just visited our country. We had an excellent dialogue, going beyond the disputed views on the

conventions, and the Board demonstrated its interest in following the initiative.

The war on drugs has ended. It was a senseless war with a fundamentalist approach characterized by rigid exhibitionism and one-track thinking, which has also been brought to an end. Before, we had unleashed an absurd war against substances, and we proposed to eradicate all crops and to establish the dystopia of a drug-free world. That war was senseless also because of the disproportionate punishments for the crimes involved, the application of the death penalty and the criminalization of users. The creation of an indiscriminate front of repression against the entire drug chain led to an increase in violence without weakening transnational organized crime.

The worst thing about the indiscriminate war was that it weakened the legitimacy of the just enforcement of laws. The extended front made it impossible to concentrate repression on the most important levels: money-laundering and organized crime. Such a manner of regulating the illicit market also generated impunity. Allow us a little literary license here, although it could also be an expression of vanity:

> "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven; a time to be born, a time to die, a time to plant and a time to harvest; a time to kill and a time to heal." (*The Holy Bible, Ecclesiastes 3:1-3*)

I quote that verse even though I am an atheist and a layperson. But the time for peace has come — a time to guarantee rights and a time to promote health, a time to approach the world drug problem from the viewpoint of human development. It is time for the General Assembly to open new avenues towards a new focus and time to build bridges of dialogue and understanding. For once and for all, we must rescue humankind from what Pope Francis called the existential periphery.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mankeur Ndiaye, Minister for Foreign Affairs and for Senegalese Abroad of the Republic of Senegal.

Mr. Ndiaye (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At a time when the international community is undertaking the implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking continue to threaten the stability of States. Indeed, in all regions worldwide, among the significant social harm caused by drug trafficking are violence, exclusion, the fragmentation of social institutions and human rights violations. It is therefore of critical importance for the individual in society to be placed at the heart of policies to combat drugs. Such policies need to be based on the principle of common but shared responsibility in line with the international drug control conventions and other relevant international legal instruments, including in the area of human rights, of course, by drawing upon existing mandates.

Senegal is firmly committed to cooperation with the international community. We consider that the three international drug control conventions constitute the cornerstone of international drug control. Given its strategic position, West Africa is particularly affected by drug trafficking, a scourge that has disastrous consequences on people's health, especially on the health of young people and women, as is attested by growing disease outbreaks, such as HIV/AIDS, drug addiction and psychological disorders. Drug users are also exposed to violent crime and early death resulting from their poor health condition. That is compounded by growing insecurity in the countries concerned.

On another note, porous borders, poverty and political instability are all factors that exacerbate the vulnerability of the West African region, which has become a hub for international drug trafficking, with alarming increases in the number of consumers. Those illicit drug flows are all the more damaging to the progress of our societies, as they jeopardize good governance, foster corruption and go hand in hand with illicit activities, such as terrorism and its financing, firearms trafficking, money-laundering, maritime piracy, human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

We need to engage the countries of the region in formulating and implementing a strategy to combat that scourge. working in a collective synergy. A pillar of such cooperation was the adoption in 2008 of the Economic Community of West African States Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crimes in West Africa and the Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking, related organized crime and drug abuse in West Africa, which was renewed in 2013. It set up a framework for cooperation between member States in the fight against illicit drug trafficking and organized crime.

We are at the crossroads of the Sahel and the Atlantic. Senegal has made the fight against drug trafficking and

related crimes a national priority. That commitment was specifically translated into the strengthening of our institutional capacity in that area with the establishment of a Central Office for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking. We set up the Joint Port Control Unit to assist with container control in the port of Dakar. Such institutions also include an interministerial committee to combat drugs, and we have strengthened national legislation in this area. In 2007 we adopted a law that criminalizes drug trafficking, thereby enabling the suppression of the production, import, export and international transport of drugs.

With the support of the United Nations Office against Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), Senegal has also adopted specific measures to improve the national systems for dealing with addiction via the establishment in December 2014 of a Centre for the Integrated Management of Addiction in Dakar.

The measures taken by States at the national level to improve the legal framework are not in themselves sufficient to produce satisfactory results, given the fact that their external effects can often be harmful to other countries. There is therefore an urgent need to strengthen our strategies to counter that threat. We must tackle the root causes. We must have strong cooperation at the subregional, regional and international levels. In that regard, it is necessary to promote greater coherence. We must reinforce coordination among the mechanisms and entities of the United Nations, such as UNODC, the United Nations Development Programme, the Human Rights Council, WHO and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, even though incarceration has failed to yield the desired effects, my delegation is of the view that the legalization and decriminalization of drug use is not the best option. Such policies can jeopardize the significant efforts undertaken by many countries, including African countries, in the fight against the illicit production, trafficking and use of drugs.

The adoption of new approaches, based on flexibility and proportionality in the penalties imposed on detained personal users, combined with tougher laws against the incitement to consumption and trafficking, should be seriously considered on a case-by-case basis and be based on the situation in specific countries. In the same vein, measures aimed at ensuring the prevention of substance abuse must include education, awareness-raising, the enforcement of laws and health-care initiatives. Such measures need to be encouraged and sustained. Respect for human rights must also be a critical crosscutting element of policies aimed at combating trafficking and drug use. Assistance in capacity-building is very necessary, especially as regards improving intelligence-sharing, training health-care personnel, and the compilation and assessment of data, as well as the capacity-building of stakeholders. Nor must we forget that security-sector reform and justice reform can be used in a favourable way to tackle drug-related challenges.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Camille Junior Edouard, Minister of Justice and Public Security of the Republic of Haiti .

Mr. Edouard (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): It is with great interest that I am speaking in my capacity as Minister of Justice and Public Security of the Republic of Haiti at this rostrum on the occasion of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, a topic that shows the willingness of the Assembly to discuss and go further into the issue of drugs in all its dimensions and complexities with a view to finding tailored solutions.

First, I commend the President, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, for having drawn the attention of Member States to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly in that regard. The interest of the Assembly in this topic can be seen from the momentum that has been generated to bring together the efforts of all Member States to effectively combat the scourge of drugs with all the difficulties that it poses to health, the economy and the stability of States.

It is evident that, despite the numerous initiatives undertaken by Member States jointly with international bodies, including the United Nations Office against Drugs and Crime, the drug situation worldwide continues to paint a bleak and alarming picture. Illicit drug trafficking has led to such evils as corruption, violence, weapons-smuggling, human trafficking and money-laundering. That situation has aroused the highest attention of the Haitian Government.

Our statement in the framework of this special session will focus on the issue of drugs in Haiti, the outcomes of actions taken, the legal framework, the institutions involved and the outlook of the Government of which I am part.

From 2011 to 2015, the activities of the Office for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Drugs and the work of the Directorate of Pharmacy, Medicines and Traditional Medicine provide an overview of the issue of illicit drug trafficking in our country. Haiti, owing to its geographical position, unfortunately lures drug traffickers, who use our space as a hub to transit drugs, mainly cocaine and marijuana.

The operations undertaken over the past five years reveal an increase in the number of drug-seizure operations and measures carried out by the Office for Combating Illicit Drug Trafficking. The data from the Haitian Observatory on Drugs reveal an increase in the number of operations conducted from 2011 to 2013, and then there was a reduction from 2013 to 2014. Many factors can explain the annual variation in the number of drug operations. However, it should be noted that, since 2012, efforts have been made by the Haitian Government, with the support of international partners, to improve law enforcement. For example, in June 2012, the Office for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Drugs increased the number of its agents from 30 to the current 100. In 2013, our country inaugurated a naval base in Les Cayes to combat sea-based trafficking in the south of Haiti. In 2014, the Office for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Drugs had some 20 all-terrain vehicles and 2 speedboats to improve our intervention operations.

Those are some areas where we are addressing the issue. From 2011 to 2015, seizures of marijuana reached 9,612 kilograms and 540 kilograms of cocaine. Assuming the prices of a kilo of cocaine and a kilo marijuana on the Haitian market were more than $40,000 and $2,000, respectively, the market value of those seizures would be more than $20 million for the cocaine and $19 million dollars for the marijuana. In the period from 2011 to 2015, there were also seizures of crack, LSD, amphetamines and, recently, heroin in the case of the *Manzanares* vessel. However, it should be noted that the drug problem at the national level especially pertains to marijuana and cocaine.

The Haitian Government has adopted legal provisions with a view to combating this scourge, including the 29 November 1994 law establishing a civilian police force, called the Haitian National Police, and organizing its functions; the 7 August 2001 law on the control of and crackdown on illicit drug trafficking; the 21 February 2001 law on the laundering of assets derived from illicit drug trafficking and other serious crimes; the 8 September 2004 decree establishing an administrative body called the Counter-Corruption Unit; the 14 November 2013 law sanctioning money-laundering and the financing of terrorism in Haiti; and the 31 May 2012 decree that established the National Commission for the Fight against Drugs.

At the international level, we have adhered to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by its Protocol of 25 March 1972; issued the 4 November 1990 decree ratifying the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, which was adopted in Vienna on 19 December 1988; and adopted the 1996 Inter-American Convention against Corruption.

The national institutions engaged in the fight against drug trafficking in Haiti are the National Commission for the Fight against Drugs, whose task is to set national policy for combating drugs and coordinating the efforts of the various State agencies and non-governmental organizations participating in the fight against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking; the Haitian Observatory on Drugs, a permanent body of the National Commission whose main task is to collect relevant data for the compiling of statistics to provide a picture of illicit drug use; the Ministry of Public Health and Population, which is working with importers, pharmacies, psychiatric centres, hospitals and the Haitian National Police on narcotics control and the analyses of substances; the Office for Combating Illicit Trafficking in Drugs, whose operations led to an overall reduction in drug-related activities in Haiti; and the Haitian Information System on Drugs, which is a national network that brings together all the actors involved in the fight against drugs with the goal of collecting, analysing and disseminating data in the areas of combating drugs in order to assist the State in making informed decisions.

Most of the non-State institutions are engaged in helping children and young people. Examples of those institutions are the Volunteer Organization for the Development of Haiti, which carries out prevention efforts in schools and through youth centres, and the Association for the Prevention of Alcoholism and other Chemical Addictions.

I cannot end my speech without mentioning the challenge in Haiti of deportees and street children. The information I have just mentioned is only a small part of the information necessary to assess the drug

situation in Haiti. Many studies must still be carried out. In particular, a national study on the prevalence of drugs in the general population is needed.

In terms of assessing the National Strategy to Combat Drugs for 2010-2015 and the development of a new strategy for 2016-2020, the Government intends to develop various actions to curb drug trafficking and to protect the population against the abuse of these substances. In addition, the Government will carry out research on drug issues to enable a better understanding of this phenomenon. Finally, a task force to monitor the emergence of new drugs that are not listed in international conventions will be initiated.

In concluding my remarks, I wish to thank once again the President of the General Assembly and the representatives of all Member States. I hope that the discussions that will take place in the panels will help inform the discussions already held in previous sessions to bolster the fight against drugs.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Hendrietta Bogopane-Zulu, Deputy Minister for Social Development of the Republic of South Africa, who will speak on behalf of the States members of the African Union.

Ms. Bogopane-Zulu (South Africa): Allow me to first convey the greetings of Her Excellency Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union. We wish to commend the President on the manner in which he is conducting these proceedings.

We can assure the General Assembly that the policy organs of the African Union have not only been active, but indeed proactive and forward-looking in the area of drug control over the past four years, including promoting a balanced and integrated approach to drug control. In 2012, the Conference of Ministers adopted the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control for the period of 2013 to 2017, based on the 2009 United Nations Political Declaration and Plan of Action. The Ministers also adopted the African common position, which formed the basis for negotiations in preparation for this particular active event, endorsed by the African Union Executive Council and the Heads of State.

In accordance with its Plan of Action on Drug Control, which is due for review next year, the African Union emphasizes evidence-based responses to drug control to its member States in order to curb the health and social consequences that drugs cause. Respect for human rights in dealing with the issue of drugs has been the departure point for the ministers in charge of drug control. For that reason, drug control is clustered alongside health and population matters in the African Union, under the specialized technical committee for ministers responsible for drugs, population and health, of which I have the honour to be the first Chairperson.

In accordance with the African Union's theme for this year, namely, "2016: African Year of Human Rights, With Particular Focus on the Rights of Women", we would all agree that women are also the face of drug trafficking on our beautiful continent. Hence, in the African common position for the special session on the world drug problem, adopted by the specialized technical committee ministers of health, population and drug control in April 2015, the health-based approach to drug control is among the pillars that inform the 10 operative paragraphs. The common position reflects the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control, for instance, the implementation matrix of its Output 2.4, which requires member States to have available comprehensive, accessible, evidence-informed, ethical and human-rights-based drug use prevention, dependence treatment and after-care services.

Finally, we wish to underline the usefulness of a regional approach. In the case of the African Union, representatives can imagine that 54 countries are at different stages of developing their national drug strategies and legislation. Representatives will also appreciate that member States think differently about drugs. The advantages of the meetings of the African Union Commission and its organs are that the different approaches can be openly discussed — one Member State cannot prescribe to all the others — and, most important, member States follow democratic approaches to include those affected by decisions that concern them, which emphasizes the principle of nothing about us without us. In that regard, we wish to borrow lessons learned in the fight against HIV and AIDS by employing a multisectoral response that creates an environment where drug users can, and should, be able to form, among other things, support groups to enable them to begin to access psychosocial services and support.

In the spirit of self-representation, we recommend the establishment of support groups in very focused areas as we take this political declaration forward.

Such groups should be established in police stations, hospitals, churches, tribal councils and any relevant formation where people access particular services and enjoy privacy. We also recommend the joint training by the criminal justice system and social work professions to facilitate the implementation of evidence-based programmes and interventions.

The African Union would have liked to see the Declaration (resolution S-30/1, annex) of the special session on the world drug problem include a balanced and integrated approach to drug control pertaining to the roles in the criminal justice system, acknowledging the importance of a health-based approach and social intervention systems; that human rights and the health-based approaches had been emphasized; that drug control approaches had been harmonized and strengthened in different regions; and that the Declaration contained provisions to ensure that our people no longer need to die in pain or fear or helplessness in whatever form. We commit to increasing our pharmacovigilance to ensure that we are able to manage those who require or might be at risk of abusing drugs.

We acknowledge the challenges our continent has, but we remain committed, as a young continent, to strengthening our programmes. We will also facilitate consensus on the aspects relating to harm reduction and we must say that we are very honoured that all the factors that inform harm reduction are included in the outcome document. We, as States members of the African Union, will ensure that we find what works for our respective member States. As we commit to reaching zero new infections on our continent, we remain committed to ensuring that the challenges that Africa experiences are properly addressed and packaged in our Agenda 2063 document. That document is what informs us and gives us hope and comfort as Africans. It affirms, on behalf of the African Union, that each one of us is committed and that together we remain committed to doing everything in our power to create a drug-free continent to get to zero new HIV infections and to implement what works and acknowledge what does not work in our diversity.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Nur Jazlan Mohamed, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs of Malaysia.

Mr. Mohamed (Malaysia): On behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), I would like to congratulate the President of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. I am confident that under his able leadership this session will be a positive and fruitful one. ASEAN would also like to extend its appreciation to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for its dedication and its hard work on the important preparatory work for the special session.

I now seek your permission, Sir, to deliver a statement agreed upon by the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations — which consists of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam — during the fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Drug Matters, held in October 2015.

ASEAN is proud to have contributed constructively to the successful finalization of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) of the special session on the world drug problem, which we recognize as an important milestone in the discussions for a new drug plan in 2019. We welcome the adoption of the outcome document to achieve the goals set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action. We share the understanding that the recommendations set out in the outcome document will be undertaken with the aim of bolstering our national and regional efforts to achieve a drug-free society.

Despite our diverse drug situations, ASEAN remains united in its core commitment to a drug-free vision, so as to provide our people and communities with a society free from drug abuse and its ill effects. We are acutely aware of the disastrous effects of drugs, not just on the drug abuser and society at large, but also on national security and development.

ASEAN strongly supports the centrality of the three international drug-control conventions, which remain relevant and will continue to serve as the cornerstone of the world drug policy. Besides empowering a collective determination and response from all nations, the conventions also build on and tap the collective wisdom of all and provide a collective platform for us to discuss the emerging challenges on drug control. In the light of that, ASEAN stands firm against drugs, including being resolute against calls to legalize controlled drugs.

We also pledge equal support to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its role as the principal policymaking organ of the United Nations for all drug-related policies and issues. ASEAN strongly supports the affirmation to that effect in the outcome document. While we work

collectively on such platforms, we also respect the sovereign right of each State to decide and implement policies that best cater to its individual needs, based on the unique circumstances and norms of its society. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing the drug issue, as each country has its own set of challenges. While some countries may choose to adopt certain approaches, depending on their own circumstances, those approaches should not be imposed on other countries, including those in ASEAN.

ASEAN is committed to suppressing and eliminating the scourge of drugs in order to achieve the vision of a drug-free ASEAN. Therefore, we have continued to intensify our efforts to implement a comprehensive, balanced and holistic approach to tackling drugs, while giving equal importance to both demand and supply-reduction efforts. This approach recognizes that a wide spectrum of factors may contribute to the drug problem, such as insufficient family support for individuals or a lack of enforcement effort to reduce supply. Therefore, upstream preventive measures, as well as downstream enforcement, intervention and rehabilitation measures, are necessary to address the drug problem. The overall objective of our efforts is to protect individuals and families from the dangers of drugs, wean abusers off their addiction and protect the security of our region.

ASEAN affirms that supply-reduction efforts continue to be an integral part of all its drug-control policies, and we have taken progressive steps to integrate our regional efforts. Within ASEAN we have created new platforms, such as an airport interdiction task force and a regional narcotics coordination centre, in order to enhance joint operations and investigations aimed at disrupting networks of regional drug syndicates. ASEAN is also fully committed to taking collaborative and cooperative operational measures with other regions to a higher level, as part of the global collaborative effort to address and mitigate the scourge of illicit drugs. We look forward to continuing our cooperation and partnership on the issue with United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

In conclusion, the ASEAN group expresses its best wishes and pledges its cooperation for the success of this special session.

I would now like to deliver a statement in my national capacity.

The convening this year of a special session of the General Assembly on drugs attests to our long-standing commitment to addressing the world drug problem. It is indeed an opportune time for Member States to engage in a transparent, inclusive and open-ended manner on reviewing the progress that has been made in achieving the goals established by the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. This special session will be an important marker for Member States in charting the directions and ways to follow in order to meet their commitments and targets under the Political Declaration and Plan of Action by 2019.

First, this session reaffirms our recognition of the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the central policymaking organ of the United Nations on drug-related matters. We therefore pledge our full support to it as it discharges its duties and responsibilities.

Secondly, Malaysia strongly underscores its belief that the three existing international drug-control conventions and other relevant international instruments should be the basis for global drug policy and for dealing with the challenges of drug control in the twenty-first century.

Thirdly, Malaysia is committed to addressing the drug problem through a comprehensive and integrated approach that is balanced between reducing both demand and supply. Our measures include preventive education, the introduction of a system of voluntary treatment and rehabilitation known as the One Malaysia Cure and Care Clinic, reintegration, the utilization of integrated substance-control management systems and the establishment under the police of a special tactical intelligence narcotics group focused on investigating and arresting local and international drug kingpins and syndicates. We also recognize the challenges of implementing an evidence-based drug policy and related measures. In that regard, we pledge to enhance our cooperation with all stakeholders at both the regional and international levels in order to promote the sharing of knowledge, expertise and best practices on drug prevention and treatment.

Fourthly, Malaysia recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all measure for addressing the drug problem. In meeting our obligations under the drug-control treaties, we believe that it is the sovereign right of every Government and its citizens to decide

what is best for them, taking into account the unique circumstances and norms of their societies and in accordance with their national policies.

Finally, Malaysia fully recognizes that the world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility that should be addressed through effective and increased international cooperation. In that regard, we are always ready and committed to cooperating with any Member State or international organization.

Thanks to the collective spirit of ASEAN member States, our aspiration to achieving a drug-free ASEAN has been successfully translated into a list of action lines under ASEAN's political-security community blueprint for 2025, which was unanimously adopted by ASEAN's leaders in November. I am hopeful that this session will yield practical outcomes that can contribute positively to our efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Sebahattin Öztürk, Deputy Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Turkey.

Mr. Öztürk (Turkey): I would like to start by saying how pleased I am to be attending this special session, which I consider a historic opportunity to solve the world's drug problem.

Today, illegal drugs and drug-related crime pose a significant problem in terms of individual and community health care, human rights and sustainable development targets. What is more, the production and trading of drugs have become extremely important sources of funding for terror organizations. Turkey has been drawing attention to the relationship between international terrorism and drug trafficking for a long time. It is one of the reasons that the drug problem is an open threat to international security and stability. In Turkey, we consider crimes related to the supply of drugs to be crimes against humanity and drug addiction to be a treatable disease. Within that framework, we carry on our fight against the production and trade of drugs based on the principle of zero tolerance.

We can achieve success in the fight against drugs, which have become a global threat, only through effective cooperation at the international level. With that in mind, over the past 10 years, Turkey has carried out 192 cooperative operational activities with 40 countries. We are also implementing profound legislative and administrative changes aimed at ensuring the effectiveness of the fight against drugs in our country. In order to coordinate that fight efficiently, we have established a commission in which several different public and civil-society organizations participate. In order to combat drug dealers effectively, we have also established special new law-enforcement units and increased the penalties for such crimes. Furthermore, while conducting those studies, we have not ignored the social aspects of the drug problem. Within the individual-family-community triangle we have conducted significant studies in the areas of awareness-raising and improving treatment and rehabilitation facilities.

We are aware of the burden of the responsibilities that the international drug-control conventions require of us. Before I conclude, I would like to underline that, with regard to this issue, we are open to any kind of cooperation and to sharing experiences. I hope that this meeting's outcomes will give us guidance in our future work.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Seiji Kihara, State Foreign Minister of Japan.

Mr. Kihara (Japan): I would like to express my sincere appreciation to President Lykketoft for convening this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, the first of its kind in 18 years. Japan actively participated in the discussions leading up to the special session. We very much look forward to constructive and open discussions during the session, as was the case during the preparatory process.

The world drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to international society and is of growing concern. I would like to raise three points that exacerbate the problem.

The first point is the global spread of the illicit manufacturing of methamphetamine. The second point is the emergence of new psychoactive substances (NPS) as a new challenge. The third point is the increasing global instability caused by terrorism and the linkage between terrorism and organized crime, including drug trafficking.

Japan is especially concerned about the third point. Instability in the international environment facilitates the vicious cycle of terrorism and violent extremism. Countering the drug problem constitutes an integral part of the efforts towards stopping the vicious cycle

and creating societies resilient to violent extremism and terrorism.

Addressing the world drug problem is a common and shared responsibility of the international community. With that understanding, I would like to highlight several of our countermeasures and international contributions.

Japan has supported the Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends Programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) since its beginning, in 2008, while giving importance to the provision of technical assistance in countering synthetic drugs, including NPS and methamphetamine, in the South-East Asia region. Last February, Japan hosted the first regional seminar on NPS in the Central Asia region, in cooperation with UNODC, the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre and the Government of Kazakhstan. During the seminar, our expert from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare shared our national expertise and experience. In addition, the National Police Agency of Japan has hosted the Asia-Pacific Operational Drug Enforcement Conference every year since 1995, to facilitate an exchange of views and information on synthetic drugs and to enhance cooperation among national authorities. Furthermore, the Group of Seven (G-7), presided over this year by Japan, agreed to further strengthen its efforts on the issue of synthetic drugs, including NPS and methamphetamine.

This year, Japan has contributed a total of $18 million to UNODC, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, in order to tackle the issue of foreign terrorist fighters and violent extremism and to facilitate legislation and capacity-building on counter-terrorism in the Middle East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Afghanistan and its surrounding countries. Japan also supports projects focused on risk-analysis on terrorism and organized crime, as well as counter-terrorist financing.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Japan's commitment to achieving the goals set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action. We believe that the three international drug conventions remain the cornerstone of the international drug-control system. We deeply appreciate the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the International Narcotics Control Board and UNODC. Japan continues to support those bodies in fulfilling their important roles.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to deliver a statement on behalf of the group of Francophone countries, States members and observers of the International Organization of La Francophonie.

The international community is today at a decisive moment in assessing the effectiveness of national and international strategies regarding drugs. That is the reason that this special session on the world drug problem has been convened. We welcome the adoption of the then draft outcome document at Vienna, following the fifty-ninth session of the Narcotics Control Board in view of this special session on the drug problem. In that regard, we would like to congratulate all of the members of that Board for their efforts during the preparatory process that led to the finalization of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), as well as all of those that were involved in the entire process.

We stress that the world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility that must be tackled multilaterally through greater, effective and focused international cooperation, in full accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Sufficient resources must be mobilized to tackle the world drug problem. We call for greater technical assistance to developing countries in terms of the principle of common and shared responsibility.

At the same time, we stress that the three conventions on narcotics control and the other relevant international instruments comprise the cornerstone of the international drug-control regime. We welcome the efforts on the part of States parties to comply with the provisions and ensure the effective implementation of those instruments, including regarding the physical and moral health of humankind and to resolve individual and public health problems, societal problems and security issues that are due to the use of drugs and new psychoactive substances, particularly in the case of children and young people.

We note that there is a need to strengthen public health systems, especially when it comes to prevention, treatment, assistance and rehabilitation. That should be done through a comprehensive and balanced approach that includes initiatives and measures based on scientific data, with a view to minimizing the negative impact of drug abuse on public health and society. In that regard, we are committed to promoting the well-being of society as a whole by developing effective strategies based on, and adapted to, the needs of individuals, families and communities. They must form an integral part of comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory national policies.

We are disturbed by the fact that about 80 per cent of the world population has little or no access to controlled medications to treat moderate or severe pain. We therefore call upon the international community to ensure the appropriate availability of such substances under international control, including opiates for medical and scientific purposes. We must also ensure their non-diversion to illicit trafficking networks, while ensuring compliance with international conventions. As an urgent matter, we must eliminate the various obstacles to the import, distribution and use of pain medication. We must respond to the serious problems of the ever-growing links among drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including, in some cases, terrorism and its financing.

We must also pursue the efforts under way to prevent experimentation and regular use of substances under international control. It has been scientifically proved that the consumption of such substances exposes children and young people to possible brain damage and psychological damage and increases the risk of dependency. We have a special responsibility to young people. It is the responsibility of the State and of professionals who work with children and young people. It is also the responsibility of families and all of those who can help young people make the right choices as they move through life.

The States members of our group will ensure that young people have the tools necessary for active participation in decision-making processes that affect them, including the development of policies and programmes aimed at avoiding their exposure to drug addiction, HIV/AIDS and other health consequences of drug abuse.

The effective prevention of addiction entails the establishment of a balanced global policy that combines prevention, early intervention, care, effective rule of law and combating trafficking. It is crucial that prevention strategies take into account recent discoveries about the risks associated with the consumption of psychoactive substances. Such a scientific approach to prevention is based on research and analysis and recommendations by experts that should guide States in choosing which prevention programmes to fund. In that context, prevention programmes based on the psychosocial needs of young people and their parents are crucial. That means that there needs to be a global approach to prevention and education that prioritizes health issues, leading to the mobilization of all of those with competencies in those areas.

With regard to education, the aim should be to adapt prevention measures to different ages and to opt for progressive and long-term prevention that also involves parents. To that end, we must promote initial and ongoing training, with stronger synergies among various relevant professions, training and prevention of addiction, for all teachers involved with young people, including strengthening common approaches among all stakeholders, including judges, police, social workers, teachers, health-care workers and other professionals.

In addition, we are committed to making the utmost effort in order to prevent and combat the production, manufacture and illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychoactive substances, including addressing the causes and consequences of crime and violence related to drugs. In that context, we must strengthen programmes on reducing supply and demand. Preventive measures are also necessary to deal with the socioeconomic factors that could encourage transnational organized crime related to drugs. We also call for improving regional, subregional and international cooperation on penal matters, especially with regard to judicial cooperation in areas such as extradition, including providing targeted technical assistance, while at the same time fully respecting and promoting human rights.

In another area, we express our concern about the appearance of new psychoactive substances (NPS), which have a negative effect on health, as well as the growing threat posed by such substances as methamphetamines. We underscore that it is crucial to adopt effective responses based on scientific data to deal with the issue of NPS, in particular their negative impact on health and on societies.

In order to better address the world drug problem, it has become necessary to tackle socioeconomic problems related to the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs by implementing global anti-drug policies and programmes over the long-term that are focused on sustainable development, especially alternative development projects. In that regard, we must consider adopting a sharper focus on development as part of our national policies and programmes on drugs in order to address risk factors that have an impact on individuals, communities and societies. We therefore call on all stakeholders to provide greater support, including via flexible financing in the long term, for the establishment of global anti-drug programmes that are balanced and centred around sustainable development and improving health and economic solutions, including basing those on real needs and national priorities.

In conclusion, the group of Francophone countries that are members and observers of the International Organization of La Francophonie remain determined to take the necessary steps to follow up on the recommendations and conclusions of this special session, in close partnership with the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and civil-society entities, and to ensure that information on the progress made in implementing the recommendations is made public and thoroughly analysed by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the lead body of the United Nations responsible for matters related to drug control.

With your permission, Sir, I shall now make a statement on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco.

This special session is indeed timely. It is taking place at a decisive moment for the international community, which must face up to significant challenges due to the worrying increase in the production, trafficking and consumption of all kinds of drugs. The session is taking place as well at a time when new psychoactive substances are appearing, along with new modes of consumption that are being widely disseminated on the Internet; hence the need to adopt national and international strategies to address such challenges. Member States and all stakeholders are called upon to make every possible effort to ensure the success of this special session. This session must also lead to specific answers and an operational road map to meet our common concerns. The road map must include an evaluation mechanism to assess the progress made and the obstacles encountered, with a view to strengthening national policies and international cooperation in the fight against drugs.

Despite different approaches to the fight against the world drug problem, and above and beyond the broad range of socio-cultural differences that have to be taken into account, the international community shares one common goal, namely, to protect our societies and our States against the negative, destructive and often irreversible effects of the scourge of drugs. In that regard, my delegation stresses the importance of extreme caution in addressing the matter of the decriminalization and legalization of drugs. An abrupt change from general prohibition to general legalization in such a sensitive area could be counterproductive and backfire, thereby jeopardizing the national public policies that make up the global anti-drug strategy.

Because of its geographical location, the Kingdom of Morocco is constantly confronted by the drug-trafficking scourge, which has been exacerbated in recent years by the interconnectedness in the activities of transnational criminal organizations. Such groups use Africa as a main transit platform and exploit the terrorist networks and rebel movements in the region, thereby threatening peace and stability in a large part of the Sahelo-Saharan region. To cope with such challenges, the Moroccan authorities are making considerable sacrifices in terms of human and other resources in the fight against criminal networks engaging in smuggling and trafficking of all kinds. The goal is also to ensure the monitoring and control of the borders and coasts of the Kingdom.

In that context, the Kingdom of Morocco wishes to draw attention to the deteriorating security situation in the Sahelo-Sahara region. That grave situation calls for strengthened regional cooperation. Such cooperation is more necessary than ever, especially in the areas of judicial assistance, extradition and information-sharing, in order to neutralize and cut off the drug-trafficking networks that are now using increasingly sophisticated and innovative methods, including light aircraft, helicopters and high-speed boats.

Morocco continues to be committed to relentlessly combating the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs and drug addiction. To that end, the Kingdom of Morocco has adopted a comprehensive and balanced strategy based on a three-pronged approach, namely, prevention, care and the fight against trafficking and trafficking networks. Existing public policies are

aimed at preventing, as early as possible, addictive behaviour and targeting both supply and demand for illicit drugs of all kinds. We have in place a long-term vision focused on the following measures.

First, there is a focus on the gradual eradication of illicit drug crops. Secondly, we are carrying out a prevention and awareness-raising programme on addiction aimed at helping drug users, which is periodically adjusted to the needs of the population concerned. Thirdly, we are providing health care for drug users and treatment for drug addicts and ensuring rehabilitation and social reintegration. Fourthly, alternative development programmes and sustainable socioeconomic projects and structures are being put in place in areas affected by illicit crop production. And, fifthly, we are boosting regional and international cooperation to maximize the effectiveness of the process to combat drug-trafficking networks.

The efforts deployed have been recognized by the International Narcotics Control Board and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The actions undertaken and the considerable material, human and financial means mobilized within the framework of our strategy have enabled us to reduce the areas cultivated with cannabis by 65 per cent since 2003.

Thanks to the work of the UNODC and the Narcotics Control Board, the global anti-drug policy has achieved significant and encouraging results. However, the available data and statistics indicate that drug production, consumption and trafficking in all categories of drugs has been increasing.

In conclusion, the situation requires that Member States pool their efforts to strengthen national public policies and inter-State cooperation in the spirit and letter of the three international drug-control conventions, which remain the cornerstone of the fight against the global drug problem. We must adapt our national and international anti-drug strategies and policies as necessary to effectively combat the world drug problem. That is the real goal and purpose of this session. We wish the Assembly every success.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of the Sudan.

Mr. Zarog (Sudan): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States.

At the outset, I would also like to extend our warm congratulations to the President of this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. Our Group looks forward to a successful special session under his leadership. The Group also takes this opportunity to thank the Secretariat for its efficient support throughout the whole process leading to the convening of this special session.

The Group of African States welcomes the adoption of the then draft outcome document, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" during the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held in Vienna last month. We welcome the adoption of resolution S-30/1 earlier in this session.

While appreciating the progress made at the international, regional and national levels in countering the world drug problem, the African Group underscores that the problem remains a major challenge for the international community, which requires effective and increased bilateral, regional and international cooperation, as well as enhanced technical and financial assistance on the basis of the principle of common and shared responsibility. In that context, the Group reaffirms its commitment to the effective implementation of the three existing international drug-control conventions, which constitute the cornerstone of the international drug-control system, and underline the importance of achieving the targets, provisions and goals set out in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. In addition, the Group reaffirms its commitment to the joint ministerial statement adopted in 2014.

The Group reaffirms that the 2016 special session on the world drug problem provides an opportunity for Member States to review the progress made in the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem, within the frameworks of the three international drug-control conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments.

The African Group recognizes the leading role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the central policymaking body within the United Nations system dealing with drug-related matters, as reaffirmed in

resolution 70/181. Furthermore, we express our support and appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations, in particular those of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as the leading entity in the United Nations system for addressing and countering the world drug problem.

The Group welcomes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), and is fully confident that efforts to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals and to effectively counter the world drug problem are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The Group underscores the importance of the African Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention for the period 2013 to 2017 as a blueprint for Africa to address the challenges posed by illicit drugs. We believe that complementary efforts by the international community will further enhance the achievement of the objectives set out in the Plan, as well as the achievement of a drug-free continent within the framework of the aspirational goal 4 of Agenda 2063 — a peaceful and secure Africa.

Furthermore, the Group welcomes the twenty-fifth meeting of the heads of national drug law enforcement agencies in Africa, held in Algeria in September 2015, and looks forward to the implementation of its recommendations with the purpose of strengthening regional cooperation to effectively counter the world drug problem.

The African Group continues to express its concern about the global scourge of the abuse of illicit drugs. The abuse of drugs continues to undermine the efforts of all countries of the continent to deepen socioeconomic development and other efforts aimed at promoting sustainable development. The Group recognizes the efforts made by African countries in preventing, eliminating and reducing, significantly and measurably, the illicit cultivation of crops used for the production and manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. Despite those efforts, the illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing, trafficking and abuse of controlled substances — which are cannabis, cocaine and heroin — as well as uncontrolled substances, such as ketamine, methamphetamine, nyaope and tramadol, remain a huge challenge across Africa, which requires enhanced international and regional cooperation, including technical assistance, based on the needs of the requesting countries.

The Group stresses that effective drug policies are those that achieve a balanced and integrated approach towards supply reduction, demand reduction and international cooperation, as outlined in the three international drug-control conventions and the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, in order to achieve a society free of drug abuse. The Group calls upon Member States to continue to address drug abuse as a health and social issue, while upholding the law and its enforcement. Moreover, the African Group stresses the importance of better coordination between law-enforcement agencies at the national, regional and international levels to effectively counter all aspects of the world drug problem, including their consequences for the safety of individuals, communities and society as a whole.

The Group reiterates its concern regarding health problems associated with the abuse of drugs and reaffirms its commitment to working towards the improvement of access to health programmes for the prevention of drug abuse, including awareness-raising, treatment and rehabilitation. The Group reiterates its concern over the unavailability and unaffordability and lack of access to pain-relieving drugs for the millions of people on the African continent who need them the most. We call for ensuring the adequate availability and affordability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion, trafficking and abuse. In that regard, the Group calls for increased technical assistance and international cooperation that allow the transfer of know-how in manufacturing generic pharmaceutical preparations that are bioequivalent and cost-effective.

Furthermore, the African Group stresses the urgent need to respond to the serious challenges posed by the increasing links connecting drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime — including human trafficking, the traffic in firearms, cybercrime, terrorism and money-laundering, including in connection with the financing of terrorism — and to the significant challenges faced by law enforcement and judicial authorities in responding to the ever-changing means used by transnational criminal organizations to avoid detection and prosecution.

The Group welcomes the efforts made by several Member States to develop combined public education, law-enforcement and health initiatives to address the rise in the consumption of drugs, and expresses concern over the legalization and decriminalization of certain

drugs in some regions of the world. It is the view of the African Group that such misguided policies will hinder ongoing efforts to combat the illicit cultivation, production, manufacturing, traffic in, consumption and abuse of drugs, to which Member States have committed themselves in the global fight against the world drug problem.

The Group should like to reiterate the high importance it attaches to integral and sustainable alternative development and preventive alternative development as, inter alia, a means to curb the world drug problem. In that respect, the Group would like to encourage the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue to use its advocacy role to encourage both multilateral development agencies as well as bilateral donors to give special attention to alternative development in the programmes and projects related to counter drug problems, and calls for adequate assistance in promoting, developing or reviewing sustainable alternative development initiatives.

In conclusion, let me assure the Assembly once again of the full support of the African Group during this special session.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Ilioski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Macedonia. Although my country aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/S-30/PV.1), I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

The Republic of Macedonia welcomes this opportunity to address this much-needed and timely debate on the world drug issue. I am confident that this discussion will contribute further to our efforts to better cope with such a phenomenon. Aware that the world drug problem can have a destabilizing effect on the socioeconomic development of our wider region, my Government is undertaking comprehensive measures for drug demand and drug supply reduction. The Government undertakes prevention, treatment and harm-reduction activities, as well as tangible measures in preventing and suppressing drug trafficking and any other form of illicit trafficking. Clear indications of the reduction in drug supply activities are the numerous seizures of bulky narcotic shipments, resulting in cutting transboundary channels. In addition, we maintain close contacts and actively cooperate with our partners from the region and beyond.

Unfortunately, the Balkan route remains one of the main trafficking pathways for illicit drugs to European markets. Especially now, with the ongoing migration crisis, that route has become more attractive to drug traffickers. Therefore, it is of the utmost and particular importance to ensure close cooperation between the region of South-East Europe and those countries of origin and final destination on that route. I recall that today's rapid pace of globalization, aside from its evident benefits, also brings many ills, triggering harmful repercussions. In that context, the Balkan route is not only negatively affecting the region, but also adds to the drug abuse beyond it.

Today, the world continues to be confronted by many challenges to which only the unified and concerted efforts of all of us can bring results. The illicit drug trade is certainly one of these. I am confident that we have a mechanism to address it effectively, including by cutting its links to financing terrorism. In that regard, this special session should be seen as an opportunity not only to address the challenges of global drug policy, but to improve and strengthen international cooperation. Countering the world drug problem is imperative to achieving sustainable development in every region.

In conclusion, I would like to assure representatives and partners that the Republic of Macedonia remains committed to continue to cooperate closely with all relevant actors to better cope with the international drug problem. In that regard, we welcome the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of the Niger.

Mrs. Djibo (Niger) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow my delegation to congratulate you, Sir, for convening this meeting, which provides States with an opportunity to discuss their experiences in the fight against drugs and to strengthen the means for a more effective fight.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of African States.

My country, the Niger, does not produce drugs; however, due to its pivotal geographical location

between sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb, the Niger has become a crossroads coveted by drug traffickers, with the resultant climate of insecurity. That is why it is necessary to strengthen regional and international cooperation in the framework of this struggle, which includes cannabis, cocaine and psychotropic substances.

It is both sad and a pity that young people, who represent the future, are the main victims of the drug trade, both as consumers and sellers. To combat drug trafficking, in 1992 the Government established a national commission to coordinate the fight against drugs, in addition to the existing frameworks of the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union and United Nations. The objectives of the commission are to identify the needs and problems in the fight against drugs at the national level; define a strategy in the framework of public policies on health and repression; monitor and coordinate the implementation of the strategy and national programme against trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; undertake an intensive campaign to inform, educate and raise the awareness of the public with a view to reducing the demand, supply and trafficking of drugs; and develop reliable statistics on drug trafficking and use. The commission, with the support of civil society, also takes advantage of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, celebrated every year on 26 June, to conduct an awareness-raising campaign against this scourge.

Among the actions taken by the commission, we can highlight the prohibition of the unrestricted sale of all pharmaceutical products that can be used as drugs, such as Tramadol. In addition to the commission, the Government has adopted a national youth policy that aims to promote training, entrepreneurship and other activities to empower young people.

In 2012, 1,250 people were arrested, including 1,172 Nigériens, 892 of whom were young people aged 18 to 29. Those figures concern both the sale and consumption of drugs. Faced with this situation, my country is committed, through the commission, to take urgent measures to prevent and prohibit not only the consumption but also the sale of all illegal substances that threaten the health, and even the lives, of our people, in particular young people.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Lebanese Republic.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon): Lebanon welcomes the convening of this special session on the world drug problem, and I would like at the outset to express our appreciation to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for its essential role, as well as our appreciation for the comprehensive and inclusive process leading to this meeting. This special session comes at an important juncture — after the adoption in September 2015 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, and also to promote democracy, good governance and the rule of law while, most importantly, leaving no one behind.

The world drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to the achievement of sustainable development, peace and security worldwide. Over the years, notable progress has been achieved in countering the world drug problem, mainly with regard to improved understanding of the problem and the elaboration and implementation of national, regional and international strategies to counter it. Nevertheless, new challenges have emerged, posed by the increasing links between drug trafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime, including trafficking in humans and in firearms, cybercrime, terrorism, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

All these prior and new challenges should be taken into account. They require an urgent response in our collective efforts to fully implement the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, as well as the joint ministerial statement of the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, in conformity with the three international drug-control conventions and other relevant and applicable rules of international law.

Additional attention should be given to the specific needs of women, children and youth, and an increased role of civil society is essential to achieving healthy lives and well-being for all, as pledged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, it is important to promote international cooperation to enhance affordable access to controlled drugs for medical purposes, particularly in developing countries,

and cooperation at the scientific and academic levels in this regard, while ensuring to prevent their diversion into illicit channels.

Lebanon, based on its commitment to the international drug-control conventions and relevant international human rights law, adopted in 1998 Law No. 673, which establishes a comprehensive legal framework in the approach to countering the drug problem. A national council related to the Council of Ministers is in charge of elaborating a national strategy and promoting international cooperation with regard to the world drug problem and relevant judicial cooperation. Moreover, the law gives drug users, under the supervision of a committee on addiction, the right to choose a State-sponsored treatment programme over incarceration which, if completed, entitles them to have the charges against them dropped.

In conclusion, it is needless to recall that armed conflicts and their consequences on youth, as well as the rise of extremism across the globe, especially in our part of the world, are additional challenges that require our collective efforts to achieve a world free of drugs and related crimes.

We look forward to substantive discussions during the round tables and a positive and fruitful outcome of this special session.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Cabo Verde.

Mr. Ferreira (Cabo Verde): At the outset, I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to President Mogens Lykketoft for convening this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, providing us with an occasion to assess the achievements made since the last special session.

Cabo Verde aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of African States.

The 2016 special session is taking place after the adoption of the landmark 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). There is no doubt that transforming our world in a sustainable manner requires international efforts to address the world drug problem. This is paramount for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies and for the promotion of healthy lives and well-being for all. It is our view that countering the world drug problem must be based on a human rights perspective in order to ensure human dignity and guarantee access to treatment, without discrimination. We join other delegations who expressed their deep regret that the outcome document does not include language on the death penalty.

In its effort to implement the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, Cabo Verde, besides having endorsed the international legal instruments on narcotic drugs, has reinforced its legal framework and adopted sound policies and ambitious comprehensive strategic plans aimed at addressing and countering not only the drug problem, but also money laundering and other related organized crime. Furthermore, our national efforts have been complemented by regional initiatives and actions to combat drug trafficking under the Praia Political Declaration of 1997 for the Coordination of Drug Control Activities and Plan of Action, in close partnership with members of the Economic Community of West African States.

Being a small island developing State located at the crossroads of the transatlantic illicit narcotics trade, with scarce resources and limited means of implementation, Cabo Verde faces many challenges related to the control and surveillance of its maritime zone in preventing drug trafficking and abuse. We welcome the adoption of resolution S-30/1, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem", and we deem it critical that its implementation be based on the principle of common and shared responsibility. To that end, it is important to strengthen cooperation at the national, regional and international levels, and to involve all relevant stakeholders. We take due note of the operational recommendations on international cooperation, as well as for interregional cooperation in order to address social issues and to improve technical and financial cooperation for balanced development-oriented drug policies.

Finally, we request the assistance of the relevant United Nations agencies, in particular the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in implementing our prevention measures and mechanisms in order to better address and effectively counter the drug problem.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. Richard Nduhuura, Head of the delegation of the Republic of Uganda.

Mr. Nduhuura (Uganda): I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President for organizing this special session on the world drug problem in order for Member States and relevant stakeholders to share knowledge and experiences of the drug problem in our global society.

Uganda reaffirms that countering the world drug problem is a common and shared responsibility that must be addressed in a multilateral setting. It is a problem that requires an integrated and balanced approach, which must be carried out in full conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, other provisions of international law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Uganda further reaffirms the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, the Common African Position on narcotics and psychotropic medicines, the African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control and the ongoing harmonization process of the East African Community member States on drug use and control.

Uganda has made advances in the areas of drug control and access to drugs for medical and scientific use. That includes revising legislation in order to strengthen measures to control drug use and trafficking, as well as the sentencing regime, in accordance with international laws and standards. Further legislative changes have been made to allow appropriately trained nurses and clinical officers to prescribe certain narcotic medicines for pain control, and we have successfully implemented a public-private partnership between Government and civil-society organizations to produce and distribute certain narcotic medicines to patients with moderate-to-severe pain, at no charge.

Uganda still faces challenges. First, the consumption of opioids for medical and scientific use is still below the African and global mean. Secondly, there is inadequate coordination and collaboration among the various ministries, departments and agencies involved in drug control, medical and scientific use. Thirdly, we lack the capacity necessary to address increased trafficking through Uganda, in particular financial, technological and human resources for the porous borders. In the light of the foregoing, the Government of the Republic of Uganda has singled out narcotic drugs trafficking as a major problem that threatens its national security and social welfare. It acknowledges the serious threats and dangers posed by drugs, including money laundering, transnational organized crime and public health issues.

The Government remains committed to complying with the provisions of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the 1972 Protocol Amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988. That notwithstanding, Uganda recognizes the principle of dual balance in the implementation of laws on the illicit use of narcotics as well as in making them available for medical and scientific use.

In conclusion, Uganda realizes the need to consider the affordability, quality and availability of narcotic medicines for medical and scientific use. At the same time, while tackling the drug problem, Uganda will ensure that it complies with standards set by the relevant international legal instruments.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Republic of Tunisia.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to warmly thank the President of the General Assembly, the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and all those who prepared this special session on the world drug problem for their ongoing efforts and the excellent preparation of this historic session.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and gratitude to all those who helped to make our discussions and negotiations on the final document (resolution S-30/1, annex) a success. That document conveys the awareness of the international community of the world drug problem, and of the fact that the problem is related and intrinsic to organized crime, terrorism and money-laundering, which are vehicles to finance terrorism. The document also allays our concerns with regard to strengthening the means to address this phenomenon.

In that context, we welcome the international intention conveyed through the final document to strengthen international cooperation and to work together in keeping with the principle of shared responsibility. That includes intensifying national efforts to address the drug problem — including its social and economic consequences — through a

comprehensive approach that respects all human rights and preserves the well-being of societies.

We associate ourselves with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the Sudan on behalf of the Group of African States. I would also like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Tunisia has always made a point of participating in all the regional and international meetings dealing with the problem under discussion in order to share experiences and information, improve practical cooperation and strengthen the relevant international conventions. We in Tunisia are working with non-governmental organizations to effectively tackle this issue, which has so many repercussions for young people, and thereby following the lead of the international community.

In order to strengthen our national efforts in that regard, and in line with international initiatives, using contributions from both the Government and civil society we have established a commission designed to prepare and submit a draft bill to Parliament dealing with all types of drugs. That is because our current law, despite its severity, has failed to curb the growing incidence of drug abuse, and punitive treatment has not produced the hoped-for results. Such drug abuse often destroys the lives of young addicts. The draft law on drugs and narcotics is important legislation, because it distinguishes between those who consume drugs and those who sell them and it addresses crimes related to drug trafficking, such as terrorism, and their impact on the socioeconomic front. Prevention has therefore become a priority over punishment, with the introduction of alternative measures for addicts, in accordance with principles that emphasize rehabilitation and treatment and the right of addicts to have access to them.

Also on the basis of the new bill, under Government auspices we will establish a national centre for drug and narcotics studies aimed at encouraging study of the problem and launching campaigns against drug abuse. Similarly, we will create a national commission on the drug problem that will provide addicts with treatment and rehabilitation in private and public clinics.

In conclusion, I would like to affirm Tunisia's determination to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the relevant international conventions, in close cooperation with United Nations agencies, including the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the principal international policymaking entity on drug control, in accordance with the three international drug-control conventions and based on the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

Lastly, I would like to reaffirm the importance of international and regional cooperation in dealing with this issue, based on radical solutions to be implemented nationally in a comprehensive approach on the economic, social and education fronts, by strengthening the efforts of every sector of the international community, including civil society. **The Acting President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Head of the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Alzahrani (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express my appreciation for the convening of this important meeting of the General Assembly. I am grateful to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and its secretariat, and to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, for their work in preparing for this thirtieth special session on the world drug problem, which is one of the most significant challenges facing the international community today.

I would like to begin by affirming the commitment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to all the international drug-control conventions. We wish the special session every success and hope that the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) we have adopted by consensus will contribute to ending the drug problem. I would like to thank all the speakers who have preceded me for their valuable suggestions regarding a scourge inflicted on the world that requires us all to shoulder our responsibilities for protecting our societies. As officials in charge of drug control, we must make every effort to provide that protection by operationalizing the shared cooperation and coordination mechanisms among our States.

The developments around this issue and the advances that have been made internationally in the area of drug control in recent years have led to increasing concern in various societies regarding the serious risks the issue poses and their repercussions for society. The changed approach to the issue advocates working collectively to deal with the problem by reducing the illegitimate supply of drugs and the demand for them as much as possible. We firmly believe that the problem of drugs and the threat they pose are global, and therefore that their consequences for society and individuals are too. Putting an end to the problem therefore requires

enhancing international cooperation. It is vital that we seek solutions to the drug problem on the basis of the relevant international conventions, in ways that are compatible with each State's national legislation and without interfering in their internal affairs.

With regard to cooperation at the regional and international levels and the importance of an approach that curbs trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances, Saudi Arabia has focused on promoting cooperation with the relevant entities, exchanging information and implementing joint operations aimed at reducing trafficking in drugs and narcotics in ways that enhance the principles of international cooperation. We stress the importance of cooperation among States with a view to succeeding in countering the illicit trade in drugs and psychotropic substances.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has also focused on providing treatment for drug addicts, who should be seen as suffering from an illness and not stigmatized. They deserve treatment and care that will enable them to be rehabilitated as active members of their societies. We have therefore established 10 specialized health-care institutions for treating addicts and providing them with psychiatric care and rehabilitation services. The private sector has also contributed by establishing three treatment hospitals. On the prevention side, we have launched a national project for providing preventive services with eight umbrella programmes designed to protect every sector of society.

With regard to crimes involving money-laundering, in 2003 Saudi Arabia enacted a system that criminalized money-laundering related to the illicit trafficking of drugs in all its forms. The Government is also cognizant of the importance of controlling chemical precursors and substances to ensure that they are not used for illegal purposes and is working seriously to develop a system and measures controlling the import, export, production and distribution of every type of chemical substances, including precursors.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with resolution 66/109, of 9 December 2011, I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, Secretary General of the Union of South American Nations.

Mr. Samper Pizano (Union of South American Nations) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 12 countries that make up the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). There are 430 million people in those countries, which cover some 17 million square kilometres.

Almost 20 years ago, in 1998 (2011), when I was President of Colombia, I stood on this very rostrum (see A/S-20/PV.2) to address the Assembly as it met to discuss the evolution of what was then already a serious drug problem. At the time, all we asked of the producing countries was that they understand that the responsibility for combating the drug problem was not exclusively for those on the supply side and that those countries that were consumers also had to take on their share of that responsibility. That was when we witnessed the emergence of the concept of shared responsibility. And here I am today, once again given the honour of attending another special session of the Assembly considering the same problem. While it is still just as serious, I think that where it now differs is that this time there are some more positive aspects that I would like to highlight.

First, the dialogue between the countries involved in the fight against drugs is much more sincere. Secondly, we have come to understand that this process must involve concerted action. There is no point in some countries fighting others when we all believe the same thing — that we must end the drug problem and that we all have different notions of the best way to do that. Thirdly, an element that I would like to emphasize is that there is agreement on the need for selectivity in policies combating drugs. The formulation of the three conventions that constitute a fundamental part of the fight against drugs permits some flexibility and selectivity to be applied, ensuring a number of things, including the effective implementation of those instruments.

That is why UNASUR has agreed on three basic premises. The first is that the drug issue cannot be treated separately from the issue of human rights. However vital drug-control agreements are, it is just as essential to realize that ensuring respect for human rights is as important as formulating such agreements. The second premise, which follows from the first, is that the most important human rights issue in this regard is that of public health. The drug problem is not a security problem; it is fundamentally a public health problem. That is how it came about, and that is how it should remain, based on objective criteria. Drugs are not bad because they are prohibited; they are bad because they are injurious to public health. That very basic reasoning has enabled us to better formulate

our drug policies. The third premise in our consensus is the importance of holding a more tolerant position vis-a-vis the weak links in the drug chain in order to protect consumers, distinguish between different types of consumption and ensure that our indigenous peoples may continue their traditional consumption of coca, as well as distinguishing between small-time dealers and drug traffickers.

None of those distinctions is incompatible with taking a firmer position on organized crime and drug trafficking in all its manifestations. Stigmatizing those who believe we should introduce flexibility is unacceptable. It is important to be flexible in implementing policies in the sectors we want to protect, and that is just as important as it is to take a firm stance against criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking. The document that UNASUR has prepared for submission to the General Assembly, based on our consensus, is focused on outlining the criteria for a more productive dialogue, which is why some of its most important proposals request that the Secretary-General of the United Nations establish an inter-institutional commission that can bring together the International Narcotics Control Board, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and other bodies working for compliance with standards in the areas of health, education and culture that are linked to the drug issue.

Naturally, we would have liked the document to include some of the issues that are part of our concerns and consensus, such as ending capital punishment, which is doing a great deal of damage in some Asian and South American countries. If that is not possible, we can perhaps work on treaties whereby, based on legal cooperation agreements, it would be possible to ensure at least that Latin Americans who are in difficult situations could be repatriated in order to serve their sentences at home. Similarly, we would like to see a policy that makes a stronger distinction between consumption and small-scale drug-dealing so that we are not punishing consumers. We would also like to see the word "democracy" included in the document. It is around all of these distinctions — as to what democracy is or is not, or what human rights are or are not — that we must start to hold a dialogue enabling us to arrive at agreement and move forward with a policy for combating drugs.

I should reiterate that I am optimistic, based on the efforts that have been made to open new spaces for dialogue, introduce new concepts, to be selective in our approach and understand that we should take a gradual approach rather than a confrontational one. That is the path of the future. Most importantly, we need to continue working together under the protective umbrella of the United Nations if we hope to emerge from this war in which we are all involved.

In conclusion, Colombia is defining peace agreements that will put an end to 50 years of armed conflict. In recent years, that conflict has been financed by drug money. It was drug money that caused the 280,000 casualties of the recent armed violence. That is why, for our countries that convened the conference — Colombia, Mexico and Guatemala — and all of the countries of Central and South America, the drug problem is not an issue just of public health, but of public safety and the very survival of our rule of law.

I urge participants to consider this once they have returned home. What will happen to those Central American countries for which the drug problem is the difference between their survival or extinction as States and as democracies? In the light of that reflection, I conclude my delivery of this consensus statement by affirming that, through Venezuela's pro tempore presidency after Uruguay, we will pursue a solution to our regional problem of drugs.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

I shall now give the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind them that statements in exercise of the right of reply should be limited to 10 minutes for the first statement and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Sargsyan (Armenia): My delegation requested the floor to exercise its right of reply to the comments made by the representative of Azerbaijan. We regret to see that abusing its membership, hijacking agenda items, disseminating disinformation, distorting the facts and simply spreading lies against my country have become the working habit of the Azerbaijani delegation and its representatives.

My delegation had no intention of speaking in exercise of its right of reply, but unfortunately we are compelled to do so. All allegations against my nation are strongly rejected. Instead of watching a showcase of Azerbaijan's bankrupt State propaganda, I think

that this respected body would be more interested in learning about the real situation on the ground involving increasing drug production and substance abuse and the transit of narcotic drugs in Azerbaijan, as well as the most recent military aggression by Azerbaijan against the peace-loving people of Nagorno Karabakh.

Claims and accusations, including accusations made by Azerbaijan against Armenia of violating relevant Security Council resolutions, are simply baseless and fabricated. We advise the members of the delegation concerned to carefully read the resolutions, if they have not so done in the past two decades, to see if they can find a single word or sentence about aggression or occupation on the part of the Republic of Armenia.

It is the exact opposite. It is Azerbaijan that repeatedly violates a number of provisions of Security Council resolutions, particularly by rejecting the proposals of mediators, including calls for the establishment of confidence-building measures between conflicting parties, such as the creation of investigative mechanisms to prevent ceasefire violations and the withdrawal of snipers from the line of conflict. Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh have accepted the measures proposed by the mediators. In that regard, I refer to recent statements made by the mediators that acknowledge that Armenia has accepted the proposals and call on Azerbaijan to do the same.

The recent large-scale offensive, using heavy weaponry and artillery, makes it unambiguously clear to the international community why Azerbaijan has been rejecting the creation of such a mechanism. The references to Nagorno Karabakh and the surrounding territories as uncontrolled do not correspond to reality. Unlike in Azerbaijan, the democratically elected authorities of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic have full and effective control over their territories. The fact that the Nagorno Karabakh Republic is not yet recognized does not mean that it is uncontrolled territory where all kinds of illegal activities are taking place. Moreover, since 1992, Azerbaijan has kept Nagorno Karabakh under blockade, and the line of contact defined by the ceasefire of 1994 is under the tight military control of the Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijani armed forces, which eliminates any possibility of such transit.

With regard to accusations and allegations that Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh serve as a corridor for the transportation of drugs to markets through so-called occupied territories, all major international studies and reports indicate the opposite — namely, that it is Azerbaijan that continues to serve as an increasingly favoured transit country and the major regional transit route for drug trafficking to Russia and Europe. For more detailed information, those interested may refer to such documents as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime *World Drug Report 2015* and the United States Department of State's *2015 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*. Furthermore, Azerbaijan's corrupt Government officials are involved in organizing the production and trafficking of narcotic drugs by covering up and sponsoring the organized crime engaged in those activities.

The deliberate violent attacks against the people of Nagorno Karabakh by Azerbaijan's armed forces early this month, which were accompanied by the executions of Nagorno Karabakh civilians and servicemen — carried out in the style of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), including the mutilation of bodies and parading with severed heads — are blatant examples of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Accounts show that Azerbaijani military personnel who have committed those crimes had been exposed to substance abuse before the attack.

Against the backdrop of the recent hostilities against Nagorno Karabakh, it is unacceptable to allow Azerbaijan to continue on its current path of violence and aggression. Immediate action must be taken to renounce violence, ensure accountability and commit to implementing proposals that will promote peace. We sincerely hope that the international community and the United Nations will hold the leadership of Azerbaijan and the perpetrators of those crimes against humanity accountable and bring them to justice, thereby contributing to peace.

In the interests of time and in respect of the work of this body, I will stop here by calling upon the delegation concerned to cease the practice of showcasing its bankrupt State propaganda and side-tracking discussions on important global problems, and instead to commit to peace and dialogue.

Mr. Rafiyev (Azerbaijan): I take the floor in exercise of the right of reply on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan in response to the misstatement delivered by the delegation of the Republic of Armenia, which was full of falsified accusations against my country.

This special session aims to provide Member States, among others, with an opportunity to share their concerns about drug-related challenges observed within their internationally recognized territories and to seek effective regional and international responses to address them. The statement made by the Head of the delegation of Azerbaijan fully conforms to that context.

As confirmed by the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the Doha Declaration — which was adopted at the thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice by consensus among Member States, including the Armenian delegation — conflict and post-conflict situations provide particularly vulnerable conditions conducive to the occurrence and growth of various kinds of criminal activities, including those of a transnational nature.

The ongoing armed conflict in and around the Nagorno Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan has resulted in the occupation of almost one-fifth of its territory by the Republic of Armenia and has made approximately one out of every nine persons an internally displaced person. As a result of the occupation, a subordinate separatist entity was established and is now effectively controlled by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. It should be emphasized that various criminal activities committed in the occupied territories, including the cultivation, production and trafficking of drugs, clearly testify to the intention of the Republic of Armenia to convert those territories into a safe haven for criminals during the past the 24 years. The financial resources acquired as a result of those criminal activities are mostly used to consolidate the occupation and to finance various organized criminal activities. Azerbaijan has repeatedly brought to the attention of the international community the presence of Armenian armed forces in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, which is a major impediment to the settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Because we have heard false accusations concerning my delegation and my country in yet another attempt by the Armenian side to mislead the international community with regard to events that have recently taken place along the line of contact between the Azerbaijan and Armenian armed forces, I would like to briefly provide some information on those events of early April.

Since the early morning of 2 April, Armenia has intensified its military activity in the area of conflict, which have been accompanied by numerous violations of international humanitarian law, tantamount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Armenia has been conducting systematic, deliberate and targeted attacks against non-combatant civilian populations — encompassing, inter alia, women, children and the elderly — residing in the densely populated areas adjacent to the line of contact between the armed forces of Azerbaijan and Armenia. As a result of the bombardment of 32 settlements, six civilians, including two children under the age of 16, were killed and 26 seriously wounded. Without the timely use of effective civil-defence measures, the number of casualties among the population would have been significantly higher. Substantial damage was also inflicted upon private and public property, including critical civilian infrastructure.

Armenia's actions represent a grave violation of international humanitarian law, in particular the provisions of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocols thereto, as well as the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. Azerbaijan has taken only appropriate measures to counter Armenia's use of force against its territorial integrity and sovereignty and to ensure the safety of the civilian population and property within its internationally recognized borders.

I would also like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the fact that out of 92 military personnel officially declared by the Armenian side as having been killed in the recent clash, more than 80 per cent were serving in the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia, as reported by the Armenian Ministry of Defence. That is yet further proof of Armenia's direct involvement in the occupation of Azerbaijan's territories and its effective control over those territories as the occupying Power. The events of early April proved that in the absence of meaningful negotiations, reliance on the fragile ceasefire regime is a miscalculation. The withdrawal of Armenian troops would allow political issues related to a comprehensive settlement of the conflict to be addressed.

Azerbaijan calls on the international community to demand that Armenia cease the illegal occupation of Azerbaijan's territories, withdraw its troops from all seized lands and engage constructively in the conflict-settlement process in accordance with the requirements of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the norms and principles of international law.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.